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AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE FOURTH CONVENTION OF THE

Graduates and Members

OF THE

WEST NEWTON STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,

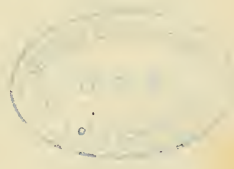
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By EZRA S. ^{files}GANNETT,

MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL STREET SOCIETY IN BOSTON.

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A D D R E S S .

ON an occasion like the present he whose privilege it is to appear before you, by an invitation which, as it must be grateful to receive, it would be more than uncourteous to refuse, not only finds the subject of his remarks suggested by the circumstances under which he meets his audience, but is restricted by a regard to obvious propriety from any wide range of topics. The graduates of an institution, the sole object of which is female education, would not willingly listen to an address that did not treat of such culture as is here enjoyed, in its connection with the character or influence of the female sex. In attempting to speak of education as the means of establishing woman in her proper position in society, I may therefore anticipate a sympathy that will dispose you to receive my thoughts with the indulgence which they will need.

It may occur to some who hear me, that the selection of this theme, at least under the form in which it has now been stated, is unfortunate, as it throws in our way one of the most difficult questions of our own, or of any period, — What is the proper position of woman in society? Who can give an answer to this question, that all will concur in accepting? At the risk of exposing myself to the imputation of arrogance, I cannot but hope a reply may be offered, that shall not meet with dissent. I would define the proper position of woman to be, that in which she may exert the most direct and largest influence consistent with the preservation of feminine delicacy and sensibility. So long as her influence is confined within narrower bounds, she does not fill her rightful place in society; and when it transgresses the limits which I have indicated, she ex-

changes that place for one that may give her more notoriety, but which all must see is less suited to her sex.

The progress of society towards the highest civilization may be traced along the ages of the past, by the position which woman has held at different periods. In countries where barbarism prevailed, and where society existed rather in its elements than in an organized form, we might expect to find the female sex degraded and oppressed. We should look neither among the savage nations of antiquity, nor among the aboriginal tribes of our own continent, for examples of the respect and tenderness which are due to the mothers of a people everywhere. But it may surprise us to discover in cultivated Greece so little appreciation of the true worth of woman. Personal beauty and intellectual accomplishment commanded admiration, but it was an admiration that could load her with a worse dishonor than that which she endured under the hands of her barbarian taskmasters. The explanation of this remarkable fact may be found in the connexion which seems always to exist between the religious ideas of a people and their appreciation of the female character. Paganism cannot but be unjust to woman, because it has no correct standard of moral judgment. It regards her as an instrument of toil or as a minister to corrupt pleasure, and does not see in her the qualities that are essential to perfection. Hence, in the East, she is either secluded from observation, or is cast out to contempt — doomed to the indolent and frivolous life of the harem, or exposed to neglect and want. Hence Chinese civilization is as far from recognizing her proper relations to society, as was the old Roman culture. From the same cause, a want of just moral ideas founded on a correct religious faith, Mahomedanism, instead of elevating woman above the position which she occupied among the nomadic tribes when the Prophet arose, reduced her to a still lower place in the estimation of his followers. An enlightened piety, by its influence on the moral sentiments, has always been favorable to the claims of the female sex ; and it is particularly worthy of notice, that the Bible, even in its earliest pages, speaks of woman with regard and honor. She is the “help-meet” of man, his companion, and bosom-friend. The language of the Jewish lawgiver, and of the Hebrew prophets, is suited to inspire a pure

and high tone of feeling towards her. It is to the New Testament, however, that she is indebted for her emancipation from the circumstances with which ignorance and passion had surrounded her. Christianity lifts her into a loftier region of associations than had before gathered around her sex, and, by revealing the nature and destiny of the human being as a child of the Infinite Father, restores her to the position which she held in the original purpose of the Creator ; while the example of Him who loved the sisters of Lazarus as dearly as the brother whom He raised to life, and who bent his gracious regards on his mother amidst the agonies of the cross, is a perpetual lesson for which both sexes should feel a common gratitude. It is only when Christianity determines the civilization of a land, that it reaches the point at which woman enjoys the estimation to which she is entitled according to the Divine arrangement of society.

It may be worth a moment's delay, to look at the practical result of such an estimation. The terms in which I have already described it, as the exercise of the most direct and largest influence consistent with the preservation of feminine delicacy and sensibility, might not satisfy all persons. They who are fond of insisting on "the rights of woman," may consider this description as ambiguous or deceptive ; though in no other, certainly, than an honest and intelligible sense would we use it. But what does the expression which we have just borrowed, import ? No one denies that woman has her rights. Are they the same with those of the other sex ? Much that is said on "the equality of the sexes" might suggest such an interpretation. This last quoted phrase, however, is not free from ambiguity. It is a political axiom with us, that men have equal rights ; yet no one understands this as a declaration that they have equal rights to everything. They are not entitled to share alike in all the blessings of existence. They have the same right to the air and the sunshine, to the means of knowledge and virtue, to the conscientious exercise of opinion ; but they have not all the same right to occupy the Presidential mansion, or to take a seat in the halls of Congress. Neither the Constitution nor common sense allows it. We say with truth that all men are equal, because reason and necessity impose the limitations which make it true. All men are not

equal in size nor in strength ; and never were meant to be. When therefore, we speak of the equality of the sexes, we must be prepared to accept certain limitations. They are not equal in all respects, and were not meant to be. There are physical differences, and there are mental differences. The one has more vigor, the other more delicacy of frame ; the one has more executive force, the other more discursive fancy ; the one discovers more logical consistency, the other more enduring affection ; the one is distinguished by intellectual acuteness, the other by passionate sensibility ; in the one reason predominates, in the other sentiment. Man occupies, together with woman, the broad region that stretches between the two extremes of character ; but he can never sink into such heart-withering debasement nor rise to such angelic purity. They have rights in common, and they have their respective rights which are not in common. If this be not true, then there must be a mutual relinquishment of what are now considered on either hand as vested, if not as natural rights ; woman must give up her right to preside in the nursery, as well as man his right to conduct the affairs of state, and the art of the sempstress must be as equally divided as the art of the orator.

Nothing so ridiculous as this, we are told, is intended ; but only that each of the parties should yield to the other the possession of certain theoretical or abstract rights, which by mutual consent, and for the common benefit, shall be always held as abstractions, while there shall be practically such a concession, or such an admission, as shall insure a virtual equality in the enjoyment and the control of the social order. Now this is just what we want, and what we maintain would be secured in the best, if not the only, way by a reciprocal acknowledgment of the distinctive traits of each sex, and a practical recognition of the respective spheres of action which these traits prescribe. Under this system of equations, which does not make *a* and *b* the same, nor always of the same value, but which makes the sum total of the terms on one side equal to the sum total of the terms on the other side, society would present the spectacle of parts combined in the happiest relations, and concurring to produce the greatest efficiency of the whole and of each part. What is needed, is not masculine women, nor effeminate men ; girls prepar-

ing themselves to be legislators, nor boys preparing themselves to be milliners ; but boys growing up to be men, and girls growing up to be women, and men and women striving, not to gain the closest resemblance to one another, but to win from each other the respect and esteem which shall be deserved by fulfilling well their several parts in the economy of life. You do not wish, young ladies, to enter the scenes of martial conflict or of political strife, because you know that you would not only serve your country and your age less wisely than in the employments which you have chosen, but would personally lose more than you would gain. It is by retaining that which distinguishes you from man, not by laying it aside to compete with him in manly efforts, that you can make yourselves felt most powerfully, as well as most beneficially, in all human affairs, public and private. Go upon the merchant's exchange, or into the Senate, and your voices will be drowned by voices louder than yours ; but let your appropriate employments be graced by your peculiar virtues, and the merchant and the senator will unconsciously, if not with an open consent, proclaim your influence to the world. Why should the lark covet the eagle's strength of wing ? Her own melodious warblings, as she mounts into the clear sky, win for her a more sincere admiration than would the attempt to imitate the proud bearing with which he confronts the fiercest rays of the sun.

The very expressions, therefore, which are used, like cabalistic words, to call up shapes of accusation and discontent for imagined wrongs, when rightly understood teach us to complete rather than reconstruct the social edifice to the inheritance of which we were born ; and confirm us in the belief, that woman's proper position can never give her any other influence than that which, in its most direct action and largest extent, shall leave her in possession of the delicacy and sensibility which belong to her sex.

It is such an influence, as we have seen, that Christianity permits, and enables, her to exercise. But the aims of Christianity are continually thwarted by opinions and customs whose roots, imbedded in the soil of ancient heathenism, still supply a vital force antagonistic to the truth. Some subsidiary power is needed, to bring the results which the Gospel announces into actual exhibition ; and therefore we speak of education as *establishing* woman in the position which Christianity indicates as properly hers.

Harmless as such a proposition may appear to us, there are those who will hold it to be fraught with mischief alike to woman and to society. And, curiously enough, this apprehension will be shared by persons of opposite tendencies. While some will dread what they may regard as an indirect attempt to depreciate those spiritual influences by which alone any one of our race can be fitted for the highest honor or the widest usefulness, others will conclude that the artificial processes to which it shall be subjected must rob the female character of its native simplicity and freedom. Such fears, on the one hand and the other, arise out of a narrow or false interpretation of the term which the purpose of our present remarks leads us so frequently to use. *Education*, so far from shutting out the higher aids which the soul needs to fit it for the divine offices of life, includes them as essential to its own completeness or efficiency. We do not consider a human being as educated, who has been taught only the rudiments of science, or who has been made familiar with its more abstruse methods. Knowledge is not education, but only one of its means. Education applies to the whole man, not to a part only of his nature. An atheist, though he should have written the *Mécanique Céleste*, would be but partially educated. Many a scholar whose mind was stored with information from books, and many a writer whose profound speculations have given him fame, must be placed under the same description. The courtesy of former times, still lingering among us, induces us to speak of those who have passed through a regular course of collegiate instruction, as educated men, but it is a courtesy which, while it conveys a reproach upon many whom it seems to honor, does injustice to multitudes who have never entered the lecture-room of a college ; for it not only puts a mark of degradation on such men as Bowditch and Franklin, but it dooms the whole female sex, the Somervilles, the Edgeworths, the De Staels, the Sedgwicks, to take their place among the uneducated populace. We use the word in no such restricted sense. Education embraces the whole structure and being of man. To train him for a pugilist or a warrior, is to do but a small part — perhaps to do no part — of the work. To familiarize him with the processes of reasoning is to do but a part. To give him the use of “all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into,” is to do but

a part. Does a knowledge of grammar, geography, arithmetic, natural philosophy, physiology, and all the other hard named sciences that have found their way of late into our school-books, constitute a child's education ? This is only a part of the coarser work, needful indeed, like much of the labor or material needed in building our houses, but least considered by the architect. The deep foundations on which character rests, the solid beams which hold its walls together, and even the form and finish it shall present to the eye, are more important. Education takes in the whole character, the whole life. We are complex, not simple beings. Complexity of structure is that which distinguishes man ; the disembodied spirits above him, the animals below him, have not such a various being as his. Man's life is manifold ; he has a bodily organization, a mental frame, a moral constitution ; he has senses, and intelligence, and a soul. They must all be educated, and be educated contemporaneously and harmoniously. He who trains the physical frame, must remember that it is not a brute that he is teaching to move with freedom and grace. He whose office it is to inform and discipline the intellect, must remember that mysterious connexions bind the faculties which are under his care to a frail body, and yet more mysterious sympathies draw those faculties towards an Infinite Object. While he who attempts to assist the soul in its progress towards perfection, should remember that neither asceticism, nor inward contemplation alone, can give to the spiritual exercises of such a being as man the character which for his own good they should bear. To educate one, is to consult for his whole capacity and his whole advantage, — to teach him and to help him to become what he was meant to be by his Creator. Hence, education is the highest service which man can render to his race. Nay, what higher service is man capable of receiving ? Is not the purpose of Providence education ? Is not the meaning of life education ? Is not nature continually supplying instruction, which circumstances oblige us to accept and use ? Is not the Gospel of Christ, while in its primary design a remedial agency, in its subsequent action an educational process, training the soul to live ever nearer to the Infinite Good ? The faithful and wise teacher in the school-room coöperates with all Divine influences, and all

Divine purposes. If he understand his work, he will aim at his pupil's improvement in every respect, and not at a result that shall only show how much can be accomplished, by a forced diversion of the energy which God has distributed through our whole nature into the nourishment of one part. The husbandman who wishes his vineyard to furnish proof of skilful care, allows the stock, the foliage, and the fruit, each to have its due share of the vitality which belongs to the vine. He is a poor teacher in whose hands the mind puts forth an exuberant promise, while the bodily health suffers, or the fruits of a worthy character are never ripened.

Education, when properly conducted, cannot constrain the native freedom and grace of woman, because its effect will only be to unfold her powers in harmonious exercise. The word suggests its own meaning. To educate is to *lead out*, to unfold, to develope. The aim of the teacher should not be to give, but to call forth. No lesson has been properly taught or properly learned, which has only deposited certain facts in the memory. What does the dancing-master, or the music-master do ? He teaches the child how to use his limbs, or his voice. The instructor in the day-school teaches the child how to use his faculties. Self-culture is the unfolding of our various powers in their relative order and mutual dependence, by means of judicious exercise ;

“ For, by the laws of spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict consistence with itself ;
Self-contradiction is the only wrong.”

Growth, rather than acquisition, is what we should aim at. Practice is the law of perfection. If it be a mistake to require a single lesson beyond the physical strength of the pupil, it is a mistake, equally pernicious, to regard an exact recitation as the end of the lesson. To bring the faculties of the mind into earnest employment, to create habits of attention and self-control, to strengthen the active powers of our nature, our whole nature, — this is what every part of instruction should contemplate as its only successful result. A learned pedant is as deformed a being as the idiot whose overgrown head proclaims his sad condition ; the one is an abortion of nature,

the other a reproach to education. The most highly educated woman is she in whom intelligence has never trespassed on the grace of gentleness, whose dignity of person is but dignity of character shining through the transparent medium of a sincere address, and whose loveliness we the more admire because we see that it is the blended expression of mind and heart, as we prize the mingled delicacy of flower and perfume in the mignonette more than the brilliancy of the tulip or the stronger fragrance of the musk-rose. Hard study or generous culture suited to lesson the attractions of woman ! It will be soon enough to believe this, when the names of Joanna Bailie and Elizabeth Barrett, and a hundred others, are forgotten, or when the value of unwrought gold is diminished by passing through the refiner's fire and under the engraver's hands.

Education tends to establish woman in a position in society where she may exert the greatest influence, because it brings all the powers of her nature into the healthiest action, and exhibits the elements of her character in the happiest relations to each other, and to things about her. It takes away nothing that would secure for her attention or deference, while it gives new beauty to every aspect of her being. A well educated woman knows how to *think*, and thought is the world's ruler. Must she be ignorant of culinary mysteries or the wonderful art by which "auld claes" are made to

"Look amaist as weel's the new,"

because she can read Homer or Whewell ? There is no necessary connexion between a perusal of such pages and a loss of the fingers' aptitude for domestic service. But if there were, on a close calculation of profit and loss I doubt if we should think we showed our wisdom — I speak now of my own sex — in preferring the nice preparations of the kitchen, or even a carefully mended garment, to the companionship of a mind that had learned to exercise the faculty of clear and vigorous thought. A well educated woman knows how to *talk*, and conversation is a mightier instrument than Alexander's sceptre, or Prospero's wand ; for it controls, not the outward conduct or the visible shape, but the opinions and sentiments of mankind. Oh, that women understood the power of

the tongue, — not in the way of noise, but of influence. By a miserable prescription of satire, they have the credit of loving to talk ; let them deserve the reputation of talking well, and we should hear no more complaints of their subordinate position in society. A well educated woman knows how to *act*, — not only in an emergency, but on the common occasions of life, when half the world are at fault, embarrassed by idle fears, entangled in needless perplexities, or incapable of accomplishing what they might and should do through sheer awkwardness. Timely and suitable action is power, whatever be the circumstances that call it out. Education ripens good sense, directs without hardening the sensibilities, and sends the law of conscience along the threads of the nervous system. A well educated woman knows how to *behave*, and behaviour is to the soul what the strings of the Æolian harp are to the atmosphere, — the means of conveying its hidden music to another's perception. What is that charm of high-bred manners, which even the admirer of democratic institutions cannot resist ? It is indescribable, perhaps, but not the less real. It comes from sentiment and association. The more just the sentiment and the more worthy the association, the greater must be the refinement of manners. Not in the homes of England's aristocracy, rather than in any dwelling where intelligence and purity have together woven the vesture of character, will you meet with true refinement. It is not rank that makes the lady, but truth and worth. A well educated woman, in a word, knows how to estimate herself, and therefore how to make herself what she should be, — chief among the objects of interest or the examples of success in this world ; for Pope's famous line,

“ An ^{honest} man 's the noblest work of God,”

would have had more the flavour of truth with such change as this :

A full-formed woman is God's noblest work on earth.

Full formed in person, in mind, in character ; whose expressions of countenance are gushes of pure feeling, whose thoughts are like the intuitions of spiritual insight, and whose life is the obedience of

love ; such an one as Wordsworth has described in verses which, familiar as they are to our ears, can never be repeated too often :

“ A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.”

In the arrangements of domestic life, the care of the young devolves on woman. To the mother is almost wholly committed the formation of the child's character during that period when it is most susceptible of impression, and when truths, like seeds dropped by the wind, are taken into a faithful soil, where at last they germinate, and spring up in a luxuriant growth. Or if, in the holy providence of God, the child is deprived of the oversight which maternal affection would bestow, it is still from the female sex that we ask for it that tender guidance which its early years require. What an invaluable power is here entrusted to woman ! The character of each successive generation is put under her plastic discipline. Now, who will use this power to the greater advantage, alike for herself and for the children who will take the complexion of their lives from her, — she who has cultivated her own nature faithfully, or she who has spent her time in a routine of mechanical duties ? Will not the mother who understands the structure of the human frame, and the laws of health which she herself observes, be more likely to fasten upon childhood habits that shall give a firm development to the organs, and proper opportunity to the functions of the body, than one who has no acquaintance with these subjects beyond what she has gained through an inevitable experience ? Would not one who had studied the writings of Stewart and Hartley, of Paley and Dymond, be better qualified to guide the first steps of the young being through life's incidents, than one who knew nothing of intellectual or moral philosophy ? Would not she who had read the Bible thoughtfully and habitually be better able to expound its truths, than she with whom it was a closed book ? And

must not the self-control which a well educated woman would maintain, give to her example and her words an authority that they could never have without such personal watchfulness? In her relations, therefore, to the young who fall immediately under her eye, the education which she shall have previously enjoyed will be just so much, important and needful, preparation for the tasks she is now called to discharge. Her influence will deepen and spread with her facility in addressing the several powers to which she must administer excitement, while careful also at the proper time to impose on them the requisite restraint. If the women of our country were all well taught, in things both earthly and divine, what a spectacle would the next age present! A generation of intelligent, industrious, moral, devout, and happy men. Would not such a spectacle attest the worth of education in those who give the youthful spirit its bent and law?

In the intercourse of life we value a person according to the acquaintance which he may exhibit with the subjects that chiefly engage our attention, since this acquaintance evinces an interest like our own, and betokens an ability to give us needed counsel. Nothing, therefore, could tend more directly to enlarge female influence than such an education as should put the sexes on a common ground of knowledge in regard to practical affairs. We have already signified our indisposition to witness such an adjustment of the social order as would draw woman into the same active pursuits with man. We should be as little inclined to encourage her to spend her hours among the anxieties of commercial enterprise, or in the business of legislation, as amidst the perils of a sailor's vocation or beneath the exposure of field labour. But she may understand the principles and history of an art which she does not practise, and may be competent to give advice which she shall never in her own person convert into example. At present women generally can give their husbands or their brothers little assistance in the discharge of the duties which specially fall within the province of the stronger sex. From this distribution of mental excitements, as well as physical labours, arises a two-fold evil which marks our present civilization. The sexes are too much separated from one another by the subjects which respectively engross their thoughts, and he who most needs

counsel or sympathy in the trials which assail his integrity, cannot seek it from her by whom it would be given under circumstances most adapted to increase its effect. The only way in which this evil can be obviated is the instruction of women in the matters which occupy the minds of those with whom they are connected by the intimacies of domestic union. Can any one doubt that they would exert a more positive influence in society, if, though unversed in the details of mercantile and political life, they were qualified, by their study of the principles which should govern the merchant or the statesman, to indicate the course he should take in any contingency or under actual embarrassment? Let the professional man be able to unburthen himself of his cares in the bosom of his family, and they will sit less heavily on his breast. Let the artisan or the farmer be able to converse at evening on the employments which have consumed his day with her who has promised to share his lot in life "for better or for worse," and his toil at the anvil, or the plough, will be easier and sweeter to him the next day; he will be a happier man, and will bring more to pass with his sinewy muscles. Female education should include, as within its lawful scope, instruction in every thing, except sin. Not, of course, do I mean that a woman should attempt to know every thing; but nothing should be considered as lying beyond her grasp or approach, nothing be allowed among human pursuits, an acquaintance with which should be regarded as either above her capacity or beneath her dignity, — nothing, which, like the old Egyptian mysteries or the esoteric doctrines of the philosophers, she must not think of knowing. Political, as well as natural, science should be studied, and political history be read, by her. She should be conversant with the industrial concerns of the country, and should be ashamed to confess an ignorance of the principles that underlay the tariff or the banking-system. Medicine and law should not be prohibited to her glance, but should invite her freest examination. She should know something of engineering, the building of rail-roads, and the construction of steam-boats. All departments of human inquiry and human industry should be open to her inspection. Were I the autocrat of Russia, instead of regulating by an imperial decree the length of men's beards or the style of their dress, I should

be much more ready to issue an edict forbidding any woman to marry a man whose business she did not understand sufficiently to hold conversation with him upon it, that should be mutually instructive. Where she had not enjoyed any previous means of acquiring such knowledge, I would impose a period of preparatory study as an indispensable condition of a legal marriage. If any one should suggest that I might fill the country with examples of the truth, that "a little learning is a dangerous thing;" I would answer that love makes one an apt scholar, and that under such a despotism as I have supposed, a system of educational institutions might be arranged, which should provide every young woman with facilities of study that would justify her in claiming the confidence, and in guiding by her advice the action, of the other members of the household. Think of the immense power that would then be wielded by her sex. We need only call to our remembrance the examples of those who have intermeddled with the affairs of state or the progress of science, to foresee the change in the social position of woman, when, instead of being banished from every earnest discussion of subjects that sharpen the wits of men, she should take her part in such discussions, as they might be held around the domestic board or the winter's fireside.

There is one bond of connexion between the education of woman and her social influence, too important to be overlooked. Many of the educated daughters of a land become its writers, who, through their contributions to the periodical literature of the day, or by the more elaborate productions of their pens, form the tastes and opinions of their age. Fearful is the author's privilege; who may give a direction to thought and a tone to character, that shall be felt long after his ashes shall have mingled with the dust of past generations. It is not the writer who gives us the fruit of the most profound study, that has the most power over his fellow-men. While his works may be known only to a few of congenial tastes, thousands shall read the pages of a fictitious tale, or an ephemeral pamphlet. While Mill or Hallam has a select circle of admirers, or critics, Scott's romances are known wherever the English tongue is spoken, and Dickens's "Household Words" enter our doors like familiar friends. It is impossible to compute the amount of good or harm that may be

traced to the light literature of the day. Of this literature woman furnishes her proportion, — of various quality, but never so poor or so bad that it will not command readers. There is yet a higher style of authorship to which she has shown herself equal, and to such writers as Miss Strickland and Mrs. Child society pays a merited respect. Now it should be observed, that the demand for female talent in the department of letters is continually increasing, and continually rising ; as the facilities for the circulation of books through cheaper modes of publication and more rapid means of conveyance are augmented, and as the ability of woman to cope with the other sex is more clearly established. We may anticipate, therefore, an accumulating power in her hands through the instrumentality of the press. How anxiously should every Christian, and every friend of his country, desire that this power may be directed by a conscientiousness too strict to permit any bribe of success to mislead it into the support of a loose morality or a covert skepticism ! Genius is Heaven's most splendid gift to man, but when perverted by selfish ambition, it is an angel's wing used to fan the fires of hell. That woman has ever consented to expend her influence in the diffusion of error and the encouragement of vice, is one of the saddest facts in the history of our race. No thoroughly educated woman will do this ; no thoroughly educated woman can do it. I care not how gifted she be by nature, if she pander to evil thought, her intellectual depravity proves that she wants the very rudiments of a proper discipline. The woman who can guide the pen of George Sand over the manuscript which she means to send into the world, whether policy or shame induce her to hide her own name beneath such a disguise, is fit only for an infant form in the school of good morals. But let the female author be just to her opportunity and to herself, and she may register her name high among the benefactors of the world. The talent and learning of her rival sex — if rivals they be — will pay her homage ; childhood will bless her pure endeavour, while the wisdom of experience shall invoke a large reward on her efforts ; and, as it was said by one in former times that he would rather write the songs than frame the laws of a people, so shall the hero and the statesman, beholding woman's influence, prefer her honours to their own.

There is yet one other channel through which woman may spread her thought and her will abroad, to shape the fashion of the time and form the temper of a coming age. In the office of teacher she exercises the highest function of her life. It is as a teacher, that the parent puts her impress on the soft character of the child, to become a permanent record as years give that character consistency. It is as a teacher, that the man of science, the scholar, the artist, the master workman, transfers his own mind into that of his pupil. It was as a teacher, let us gratefully remember, that the Son of God pronounced those "beatitudes" which have wrought such changes in human judgment and human aspiration. It is as a teacher, let us reverently repeat, that the Infinite Being communicates the knowledge and the enjoyment of his Divine perfections to his children on earth.

Instruction comes at God's behest,
To make man wise, and leave him blest.

See then the privilege for which the teacher should be thankful, the trust to which she should be faithful. See how she may labour in concert with all truth and love, with all that is beneficent in heaven and all that is excellent on earth. See how she holds an influence which every day augments, as it gives her a wider sphere of action and a firmer hold on those whom that sphere encloses. See, too, how important her own education becomes to her, as the means of fitting her for the position which she assumes. An untaught teacher may get some good herself from successive failures, but she can only harm those to whom her attempt to be their guide is an affront. The education which she should bring to her task, — though ill-chosen is this word — to her noble office, let us rather say, — should be various and thorough; never complete, for it never can be, — but as large and as accurate as circumstances will let her make it. Why was the profession of the teacher undervalued in former years? Because neither the teacher himself nor the community required of him that ample preparation which was necessary to make him an object of sincere respect. When the school-master wrought eight months of the year on his farm, and then took up the ferule as his badge of office for the four months in which to work in

the fields was impossible, or the college lad came, with no experience but that which had given him a sophomore's self-conceit, to earn by the toils, (if not wasted in the frolics) of a winter vacation money enough to pay his next quarter's bill, — when the former knew not what to teach, and the latter knew not how to teach, — who can wonder that teaching was considered neither as an art nor a profession, but only as an episode and a device. Education should be the teacher's business, and, therefore, it should be learned. The sound maxim that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, seems to have been applied in New-England to every thing else sooner than to the schoolmaster's work. There must be not only knowledge, but aptitude, — ability of communicating, as well as capacity of receiving. Of what avail would be all the learning that was ever crowded into a Porson's head, if he could not impart it to others, nor awaken in them an enthusiasm that should be their guide along the path of acquisition? Of what use is the brightest light within a lantern whose sides are opaque? There must be an aptitude to teach, and this must be gained by experience and by judicious assistance. There must be a love of teaching, and this must be enkindled by sympathy and success. If here seem to be an exorbitant demand of prerequisites for the teacher's office, remember that we are speaking, not of teachers as they have been, nor as they are in every instance now, but of teachers as they should be, and as they will be hereafter, at least so far as our Normal Schools shall supply them to the country. We are speaking of teachers who are worthy to hold — nor worthy only, but sure to hold — the most authoritative yet persuasive power known in the land. We are speaking of woman, when in the teacher's office she exercises an influence which, without endangering the delicacy or the sensibility that belongs to her sex, makes her not only mistress of hearts, but the former of character and the ruler of life.

To those who enjoy the advantages of such an education, I need not have said what they already include among the postulates of human belief. It is not for their information that I have treated a theme on which their minds are already furnished with materials for a correct judgment. It has been a grateful office, to trace in simple lines the truths which define woman's proper position in

society, and point out the method by which she may reach that position. The graduates and pupils of a Normal School understand the design of the institution which assembles them on its successive anniversaries, amidst its pleasant associations, too well, to leave it even within the bounds of decorum, that I should attempt here to portray their privileges or their duties. Let me only remind them, that the Normal scholar leaves a name which she should never forget. She is a *rule* for others, a standard by which they may measure and fashion themselves. How blameless then should be her life, how progressive her character! She teaches as she lives. The world is her school-room, and society her pupils. Let her example illustrate the meaning of her favorite motto: "Live ever to the truth."

The success of the enterprise to which the legislature of our State, under the impulse and with the aid of private liberality, has given a trial of sufficient length to secure its future continuance, must fill our hearts with joy. Massachusetts can show no more conclusive evidence of her foresight and public spirit, than the Normal Schools which she has established. May they crown her with honor, and strengthen her claim to the respect of her sister States; and in the distant future may her efforts in behalf of female education, and her desire to place woman in her just position, be the last tokens of her wisdom that shall be effaced by the hand of oblivion! In the museum of the Vatican at Rome are the tresses of a lady who lived whether in the days of the Cæsars or of the republic is unknown, which are said, however, to have been found in a tomb on the Appian Way, in a state of perfect preservation, while all other remains of her, her kindred, and her generation, had perished. In the changes which come over the fortunes of nations, our present strength may decay, the political and social renown of New England perish, even her colleges and her churches be forgotten, and of all in which Massachusetts rejoices nothing survive the waste of ages, except the glories which female education shall have shed upon her name. Then may some future antiquarian disinter from the long closed receptacles of the past the records of this institution, the fair memorial of the character once borne by our Commonwealth, the only imperishable vestige of her life!

ORDER OF EXERCISES
AT THE
FOURTH CONVENTION OF THE GRADUATES AND MEMBERS
OF THE
STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 1850.

I. HYMN—ORIGINAL.

(MUSIC FOR THE DAY BY LOWELL MASON, ESQ.)

Once more with joyful hearts we come,
With greetings warm and true,
To welcome back each well known face,
And happy hours renew.

We gladly leave our present toil,
One moment here to gaze,
On scenes which memory brightly gilds,
With light of other days.

As thus we pause in busy life,
To breathe the pure fresh air,
Which wafts from days that long are past,
Sweet memories lingering there ;—

We feel new courage for our work,
New strength in every vein,
The cheering sunlight of this day,
Will in our souls remain.

'Tis ours to place pure wisdom's crown,
Upon the brow of youth ;
To speak in love those holy words,
“Live ever to the truth.”

Together, side by side, we stand,
Pledged to this noble cause ;
God grant us strength to do His will,
To love and teach His laws.

S. L. D.

II. PRAYER, BY REV. MR. WHITE.

III. WELCOME ADDRESS, BY THE PRINCIPAL, MR. STEARNS.

IV. SONG.

V. PRIVATE MEETING.

—O—

Exercises in the Church, at 11 o'clock, A.M.

I. VOLUNTARY.

II. PRAYER BY REV MR. GILBERT.

III. HYMN.

IV. ADDRESS BY REV. DR. GANNETT, OF BOSTON.

V. SONG.

Onward, Onward, is our nation's cry,
Learning's cause can never die!
Onward, Onward, one and all reply.

Onward, Onward, is the loud demand,
Learning smiles on every land!
Onward, Onward, still in heart and hand.

Onward, Onward, flow ye streams of light,
On, till earth is free from night;
Onward, Onward, in Education's might.

Onward, Onward, spreading virtue's reign,
On, till earth is free again;
Onward, Onward, spreading virtue's reign.

Onward, Onward, roll the tide of good,
O'er the earth thy sacred flood,
Onward, Onward, roll the tide of good.

Onward, Onward, freedom's sacred cause,
Freedom guarded e'er by righteous laws;
Onward, Onward, Education's cause.

VI. BENEDICTION BY REV. MR. OTHEMAN, OF CHELSEA.

From the church the Convention proceeded to the town hall, which, as well as the hall of the school, had been decorated with much taste, by the members of the Institution, to partake of refreshments provided for them. REV. DR. SEARS, Secretary of the Board of Education, presided at the COLLATION, and the Divine blessing was invoked by the REV. DR. GANNETT, of Boston. The tables were served by the undergraduates, by whom the repast had been prepared. Excellent addresses were made by DR. SEARS, and MR. G. B. EMERSON, of the Board of Education, G. F. THAYER, ESQ., of Boston, REV. B. FOX, of Boston, and REV. MR. CARPENTER, of England. The following songs were sung:—

SONGS AT THE COLLATION.

I

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And never brought to mind,
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And days of lang syne!
 For auld lang syne at school,
 For auld lang syne,
 We'll have a thought of kindness yet,
 For auld lang syne.

We oft have cheer'd each other's task,
 From morn to day's decline,
 But memory's night shall never rest,
 On auld lang syne.
 For auld lang syne, &c.

Then take the hand that now is warm,
 Within a hand of thine,
 No distant day shall loose the grasp,
 Of auld lang syne.
 For auld lang syne, &c.

II. ORIGINAL.

Now when summer gay is o'er us,
 Now when life seems all before us,
 We here have met.
 Brightly beaming hope has led us,
 Brighter pleasures since have held us,
 Till we must part.

Yet we will not part in sadness,
 For our hearts are filled with gladness,
 Thanks for this day.
 We each other's hearts have strengthened,
 We each other's joys have lengthened,
 By love's kind sway.

Love, her band is closer weaving,
 As nearer draws our time of leaving,
 Scenes held most dear.
 Yet "good bye" we'll say in gladness,
 For we do not part in sadness,
 Faith, hope is near.

M. G. C.

—o—

In the evening, the Convention reassembled in the school hall, where a splendid gold watch, chain and pencil, were presented, in behalf of her former pupils, to Miss ELECTA N. LINCOLN, who had long been a most able and successful teacher in the school, and whose resignation had been that day announced. After some time spent in delightful social intercourse, and the passing of votes of thanks to the Orator, and Chaplains of the day, — the Committee of Arrangements — to the many persons, who had, in various ways, kindly assisted in the preparations for the Festival, — to the Parish Committee of the Second Congregational Society, for the use of their church, and to the Selectmen of Newton, for the town hall, the Convention adjourned to meet again in two years.

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